

How do you train MC leaders?

by: Lance Ford

In training leaders of missional communities our approach is to go easy on the leader-speak while concentrating on the “follower”-posture of *being* a good news or, gospel person. We want to help potential leaders carve their doing out of their being. This eliminates undo pressure and distraction on periphery issues and brings a concentration on the *walking with Jesus* centrality that is so vital to missional living.

A leader must first live missionally before he or she can lead missionally in an authentic way. We want to develop *followable* leaders who will develop a lineage of followable leaders. Specifically we want to help missional community leaders develop a seamless rhythm of mission in his or her own life.

Beginning with *Spiritual Formation* as a basis, we help them develop a hearing ear and space in their daily life to actually *hear* from God, and to expect to hear from God. This is essential. If a person is not taking her cues from the Holy Spirit as she goes through her day then she will not be able to respond in natural ways. Otherwise she is only a candidate for outreach events and programs; which is not what we mean when we speak of a missional church. It takes missional people—who are living on mission—to be a missional church.

Redefining fellowship and brotherhood is at the basis of *Common Community*; the second necessary sphere of missional community leader training. Otherly-living is not easy for any of us. It doesn't come naturally; especially for individualistic Westerners. The beauty of biblical hospitality, sharing, and genuine familial concern and action is essential for genuine missional communities to come into being.

I can't say I have ever heard the attractional/missional debate bring up genuine New Testament community as having the greatest potential for attractiveness to a watching world. But for the infant church in the early centuries the authentic love and sacrificial sharing of the believing community was a shining beacon to non-believers that there was something totally different about these people (Christians). We must address issues of consumerism, individualism and risk into the equation of our training in order to develop missional communities.

For us, *Missional Living* is a third sphere of discipleship that authenticates our lives as followers of Jesus. We must train missional community leaders to live with the eyes of a missionary.

The *sent* (missio) nature of a disciple involves moving throughout our day looking and listening for redemptive opportunities. A variety of situations, some seeming to be big, others appearing to be small, present themselves as opportunities to exercise our missional muscles as the *sent* people of God. The key is to live with

eyes and ears open to what the Holy Spirit says as you go through your day. This is where the spiritual formation component is so vital, as the foundation for our daily lives.

An integrated rhythm of missional posture is not a linear set of steps. It is more like a dance. A dance of life with God as our leading partner.

Lance is a National Team leader with Forge America and Missional Strategist for the Mid America District of The Christian & Missionary Alliance. With over 20 years of experience as a pastor and church planter, Lance is a writer, coach, and consultant who has designed unique training systems currently being used by networks, seminaries, and leaders throughout the world. Lance and his wife recently moved to Kansas City to establish a network of missional communities, call KC SENTral. His passion is to give himself to resourcing and equipping churches and leaders anywhere and everywhere as they develop missional lifestyles. Lance holds a Masters Degree in Global Leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary and is an adjunct professor at Biblical Seminary, Hatfield, PA. He co-authored the book, Right Here Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People, with Alan Hirsch. He has a second book, First Followers, co-authored with Leonard Sweet, to be released by Thomas Nelson Publishers in January of 2012.